

PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE.

107

word arrived from the elder of the district. Then one of the archers accompanied him to the boundary which took between two and three hours' walking. Here he had once more to wait until word arrived from the elders of this district, whereupon the first guide handed him over to a second and then returned. In this way the second guide brought him to a third, and the process continued until he had had more than twelve guides, being over seven days on the way before he reached the province of Batticaloa and the flat district which extended to the coast, and is inhabited by Tamils. He and his ten or twelve companions never suffered any want on the way, as the Veddahs supplied them with food, consisting of good dried venison which was preserved in honey, ground nuts (probably yams) and fruit. But none of the Veddahs spoke a word with him or his companions because it was so prescribed by their customs¹.

Nevill's account of the life led by both the wilder and the more sophisticated "forest" Veddahs has been quoted on pp. 81 and 82, in the chapter on Family Life. Nevill's experience was chiefly gained among the Veddahs of the Bintenne, but if rather less emphasis be laid on the hut built "close to a place where water can be got," and it be realised that even during the hot dry season rock shelters are the common homes of the wilder Veddahs to the east of the Badulla-Batticaloa road, all that he says on this subject can be implicitly accepted.

Commenting upon Nevill's account, the Sarasins point out that since trespassing on land belonging to another group leads to fierce quarrels, the condition described by Nevill must be taken to imply that the territory of each group includes the whole or a part of one considerable hill or rock *massif*. Our experience enables us to confirm this suggestion, and it will be shown later that not only are hills the property of particular groups, but that subject to the rights of the group there is also personal property in hills. Text figure 4 is a sketch map of the territory of the Henebedda Veddahs, and roughly shows the position of their caves, which are named Bendiya-galge, Pattiavela-galge, Hitibeminigalge, Punchikiriammagalge, Uhapitagalge, Maladeniyagalge and Kirawanbalagalge. The last is almost

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 479.

PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE

109

so as to form two rock shelters, each of which has a well-cut drip ledge in no respect differing from those admittedly cut by the Sinhalese about the time that Buddhism was introduced to the island, and the lower cave has in addition two square sockets cut in its roof resembling those discovered by Mr F. Lewis at Nuwaragala and figured by him¹. Further, there are three steps cut in the solid rock shelters, and other smaller steps and signs of ancient working are to be found in the caves, though there are no inscriptions on the rocks of either of these caves, as there are below the drip ledge of Uhapitagalge. 423 361

Pattiavelagalge lies at a distance of rather less than an hour's walk to the S.W. of Bendiyagalge, at the base of the rocky hills forming the boundary of the territory of the Henebedda community. It was said that the name of this cave was derived from *pattia*, a place where cattle were tied, and *veta*, a field, the reason for the name being that about 100 years ago a Sinhalese chief, recognised by the Veddas as being partly of Vedda descent, was allowed to come and live here and pasture his cattle. This man may have been a fugitive during the rebellion of 1818, but this could not be determined with certainty. Hitibeminigalge lies a short distance due west of Bendiyagalge. [163]

Punchikirihammagalge is a small shelter situated almost due south of Bendiyagalge and near the main track across the country. At the present day it is often used by Tamil gall-nut gatherers. Maladeniyagalge, about two miles from Ambilinne rest-house, is also much used by gall-nut collectors. Uhapitagalge, shown in Plate XVII, figure 2, has a well-carved drip ledge, beneath which is the inscription in Brāhmi characters referred to on p. 22.

The natural boundaries of the Henebedda territory as well as the fact that they still have as neighbours the Danigala Veddas, who exercise a jealous supervision of the border on that side on which there is no well-marked natural boundary, made this particularly easy territory to map out. The Sitala Wanniya territory, which we have attempted to delimit in text figure 3 was more difficult and its boundary is only an approximation.

¹ *Proc. Roy. As. Soc., Ceylon Branch*, Vol. xix, 1907.

THE EMBRACE OF THE TREES

35

On sereener days, it flamed through the Island making it its permanent home, while in India, the land of its birth, it dwindled away. 000

We had undertaken this trip with the object of visiting Memingallagolla where we learned the wildest Veddas of the Eastern province lived; but on coming to Omuna we found that that place, only twelve miles away, was quite unknown to the present folk of Omuna, a pathless barrier of dense jungle intervening. We made the best of a bad job; and, abandoning our original project, struck west for Dolagalwella. 114

At evening we camped by a desolate pool called *Haven-hapane-mulla* (rush-cutting nook). There is barely a spot in these jungles, however lone, that has not its name, thanks to the nomadic Veddas. Here was a glade in which they hunted, or a pool at which they drank, there a hole in which an axe was found (*Poro-ihutu-walle*). 103

The only indications of the track we followed were the barely recognisable prunings, fifteen years old, of saplings. The forest was ideal for travel; in the shelter of the great trees the morning air was cool and refreshing. Coming to the Maduru Oya we walked a mile up-stream and climbed the mimosa-covered bank, soon to be lost in a wilderness of trees. A leader monkey yelled a warning to his clan, a surprised sambur belled startlingly close; but after that a silence prevailed unbroken by the song of a single bird. We spent the night by a rocky streamlet close-hugged by dense forest walls. Heavy clouds crept over us to the rumblings of thunder. The blurred crescent of the moon struggled for freedom. Our campfires crackled in the ghostly gloom, and quiet human voices pervaded the forest's deadly stillness save for the melody of the trickling water. 000

A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover.

Deserted Mahaella marked the limit of our westward journey. Here we struck at right angles the northern track to Yakkure, but, before taking it, deviated south to the village of Dolagalwella. For three days we had followed uncertain game trails, and seen no human beings besides those of our company. The path now began to show signs of use: there were chipped trees, polished stones on which axes had been whetted, and fire-places where monitors were roasted. Obviously we were nearing civilisation! Indeed, here it was. 361

Scaling a strong stockade we found ourselves in a *chena*, some twelve acres in extent, in which nestled the half dozen huts of the closely related families of a Vedda patriarchy. The maize and *kurukhan* crops had been taken, and the place was now rank with a catch-crop of vegetables and fruit: beans, brinjals, melons, cassava, plantains and papaws. Chillies luxuriated; there was not a compound but had its vermilion heap, not a hut but had a section partitioned off with frame and fire-place for drying them during the rains; chillies were the current coin with which these folk traded with the pedlar Moors. 241 [436]

The males of the settlement were away in quest of food, and only the women and children remained. No folk on earth, perhaps, are shier than Vedda women; in the presence of the stranger they are dumb. Some of them were relatively fair-complexioned, presumably from Kandy admixture; all wore an abundance of bead ornaments, finger 609 301

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

47

fish which they tore out and ate. They were afraid only of the buffalo and the dog. The Veddas, not very long ago, are said to have herded the last of them into a cave and destroyed them. Brute or man, persistent rumour in jungle countries brings the *Nittaswo* within the realm of the probable. 776

Entering the forest at Siyambala Anduwa, and working north, we strove to maintain a route as far removed as possible from civilisation represented by the coast road on the one hand, and the Badulla-Batticaloa road on the other. 000

Two miles within the jungle was the old path, now over-grown and abandoned, from Badulla to Pottuvil. It led hereabouts through a narrow pass guarded, it is said, a few generations ago by the Karande Hela Vedda who, having fenced it across, levied toll on travellers. Intercepting, as he did, a trade route from the interior to the coast, we may be certain he made a good thing of it, getting his share both of the *kurrukken*, maize, vegetables and fruit of the *Vanni*, as well as of the paddy, salt and dry fish of the Coast. 173

Kandanketiya, nine miles from Siyambala Anduwa, boasts an ancient temple of the era of Dutugemunu. We found it in the keeping of a doddering priest of eighty, who showed us round, all the while muttering "hu-hu, hu-hu," his only form of comment. His bed-room, dark, airless and dirty, was better adapted to mice and spiders than human beings. A great brass spittoon, emptied he told us once in two weeks, was the proudest thing there. A stupendous bo-tree, planted by himself, mocked with its vigour the withered frame of him who had tended it. Throwing open the doors of his little temple, without much ado he bade us enter the holy of holies, and pointed proudly to pictures of *devas* and harpies, half spurred-fowl half woman, who he confidently asserted lived in the Himalayas. Incidentally he indicated a money-box on the altar. But no sooner were our donations secure than his interest in us rapidly declined, reaching its climax when we told him we were going: "All right, go," he said, settling down comfortably on his bed. 172

A hornbill flying repeatedly to a large tree attracted our attention. Perching itself wood-pecker-wise on the trunk, it fed the occupant of a hole there with berries which it brought out of its crop one by one. We were told this was the male feeding the female he had deprived of feathers and shut up in the hole. We suggested there might be young. "Not so," said a woman; "where then are the feathers and droppings at the root of the tree?" Here was an opportunity to test the truth of gossip we had heard regarding the domestic amenities of hornbills. A man was sent up to the nest. Squeezing his hand through the narrow opening he produced an egg; then seized something by the beak, and unsuccessfully tried to pull it through. With an axe he enlarged the hole and soon handed down to us a veritable travesty of a bird. Scared out of her wits, voiceless, featherless, with half-opened beak, she flapped pathetic wings and tumbled ludicrously about in attempts to escape. She was obviously unfit for existence in the outer world and we returned her to her dark abode. Rumour was right, the male hornbill took no risks. 136

Bowala village lies at the northern end of Westminster Abbey. Buried as we were in the forest depths, we had not seen the hill since leaving the heights of Haputale. Suddenly the leviathan bulked over the trees. "There, that is why it is called Govinda Hela*," said our guide pointing 361 [103]●

**Goda Inda Hela*—rock where the monitor lizard is.

- 361 [103] to a cleft fragment of stone resembling a giant lizard crawling up the sheer face of the rock.

[241] We found Bowala deserted. The young coconut and areca palms, plantains, sugar-canes and pine-apples there were choked with grass and lantana. The huts were falling to pieces and leaked like sieves as we found to our cost when a shower overtook us; the grass thatch, ruined by white ants, was the home of innumerable rats, brahmin-lizards and poisonous *karawalas** that hung head-down from the rafters ready to strike.

221 The desolate state of the hamlet is explainable by the *chena* life of the people. In December, as the crops ripen, they forsake their homes for the shacks of the *chena*, leaving perhaps an aged couple behind. In April, when the crops of *kurrukhan* and maize have been taken, they return to the village to repair their huts and wean back to life such plants as have survived the inroads of wild animals and weeds. In July, *chena* land is leased again; and so the wasteful routine is repeated.

621 A hamlet occupied for six months and abandoned for six has not much chance of headway. If the population of a village is at all numerous, there are sufficient people to occupy both *chena* and village, without detriment to either; if the community is very small they remain *chena* dwellers with no permanent homes; if intermediate, we find the state of things at Bowala. In favoured places a mere nucleus of human beings swells in time to a thriving and populous village. But in the insalubrious *Vanni* privation and ignorance keep the numbers low. Two dwindling villages may combine to save one from extinction. Often a place populous to-day is a wilderness to-morrow and *vice versa*. This is typical of the kaleidoscopic way the forest hamlets change. Names so fine on maps—*Illukpitiya*, *Mahaella*, *Embillene*—are found when reached to be derelict; a crumbling hut perhaps hidden in jungle, or a hardy tamarind or palmyrah the sole witness of vanished homes.

101 Bowala folk are better jungle men than many farther inland. Though far from fastidious in their choice of meats, for they eat the mongoose and rat, they abhor the porcupine, sure mark of Vedda ancestry. They [262] fashion bags of beaten *rili* bark and carry pouches of monkey skin that [287] ladies might envy. Their bed-frames are spanned with sambur-hide, [287] their powder flasks are the dried scrota of sambur. A monkey skin, [415] stretched over a coconut shell fitted with handle, screw and string, and [534] manipulated with a small bow, serves them as a violin out of which they scrape mournful disharmonies. They snare the smaller animals, such as [224] the hare, pangolin and chevrotan, with *habbakas* or weighted frames poised over passages used by these animals; we saw one of these set for chevrotan with a bundle of urine-drenched leaves for bait. Some among [222] them could brave the formidable heights of Westminster Abbey in quest [481] of the combs of the rock bee—the most hazardous of jungle pursuits.

000 We spent the night in a large cave at the base of Westminster Abbey and made the ascent next morning, replenishing our water bottles at a small basin formed by the buttressing roots of a rock-tamarind and rejoicing in the grandiloquent name, for so trivial a thing, of *Kothuru-pathaku* (gnat-water-hole).

It had rained all night and there was still a drizzle. Squeezing through crevices, crouching through low caves, climbing trees, clinging to rough

*Small venomous snakes.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

49

ladders prepared for us beforehand, we made the laborious ascent; finally shinning up the interlacing roots of an obliging banyan tree that gripped a great hump of rock, we attained the summit of the northern bastion. Here we found the usual signs of old-world occupation: cisterns and seats cut out of the living rock, fragments of brick and pottery, and strong stone walls overrun with scrub and pine-apple: [72]

The height was desolate but for wild cats, and songless but for the boom of wanderoo far below. A ceaseless drizzle blanketed in mist the superb view of forest and hill we commanded; but every now and then the mist lifted and showed the graceful contours of the ranges. There, crouching like a headless beast, its neck indrawn, was magnificent Wadinalaga; to the south was the long straight ridge of Moneragala; and close at hand were the twin domes named by the Veddas *Thanagoda* (breast-mounds) and behind them *Thanakirigoda* (breast milk mound) with wracks of milky mist caressing their summits. [103]

On our descent we were better able to discern certain features of the rock the rain had so far hidden from us. Out of long horizontal fissures high on the perpendicular face of the hill, projected numerous sticks driven in for foot-hold by honey-gatherers; and dangling from the summit was a long cane that had once borne a daring fellow within reach of seemingly unassailable hives. Here we heard a marvellous tale: A Vedda of Bowala once saw a heap of wax that had accumulated on a ledge which an overhanging brow of rock made inaccessible. Nothing daunted, he armed himself with a torch and sambur-horn, descended by just such a cane as we now saw, and swung himself to and fro within reach of the wax, heating it with the torch each time he approached it. When he thought the mass sufficiently molten he stuck the horn deep into it and waited till it set. Then swinging himself once more towards it and seizing hold of the embedded horn, he leaped on to the ledge collected the wax, and swung off again. He did this year by year. On the last occasion, the horn not being sufficiently secure, the poor fellow was dashed to death among the trees and stones below. His wife who had witnessed the tragedy carried back word, "*Meena kalanghalangme popeshorai*," which being onomatopoeic hardly requires rendering. 222 481

Our departure from Bowala was ceremonial. On the path stood a drummer, with two boyish figures disguised from head to foot in dry plantain leaves, that were plaited into tails behind. Their faces were hidden by speckled masks made from fragments of gourd-rind, with slits for eyes and mouth, and a blob of resin with fibres attached for nose and beard. Their bare feet and hands were the only indications that these scare-crows were in reality human beings: 535 302

The drummer struck; the dance began. The time twelve noon. The floor a root-ridden path bestrewn with elephant droppings and intercepted by beflowered streams. The walls, bordering forest trees festooned with great lianas on which parrots chattered. The dazzling sky above. For orchestra, the staccato rhythm of the drum, the jangling bells that studded the deerskin greaves of the dancers, the sound of a falling branch perhaps, or the short, sharp clamorous outburst of chirping cicalas. For a mile or more the performers led the way with a swaying two-step dance, hopping circularly on one leg to let us catch up did they out-distance us. At the next village the drummer wore the greaves, and [534]

[The hill called Westminster Abbey. - Analyst].

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

V 50

535 with muscular grace, performed the flower dance to the Peradeniya god for the favour of crops.

V
562 The women of Kadiniyaya slunk into their hovels at sight of us. A
302 man sat scraping the hair off a girl's scalp with a blunt knife; another
755 was muttering a spell over some lime juice for a fevered wretch. Swarming
252 blue-bottles and a most unholy odour led to the discovery, in a covered hole, of putrid sambur entrails awaiting the pot; like civilised epicures they apparently fancied their game high!

V
● 103 Wadinagala, the southern Friar's Hood (the mountain that rose to Buddha's bidding), towered before us as we lay encamped in the picturesque little village of Landegama. Here we learnt that a company of gypsies, some fifty strong, had preceded us. These forest gangs, unlike those of the road, are nomadic shepherds, pasturing their herds in the jungle plains. They hunt the sambur with dogs and javelin. Approaching coastal towns from time to time they barter their cattle, and are on the whole fairly prosperous. But a gipsy is a gipsy the world over, faithful to traditions of snake-craft and beggary, and these are no exception, plying their trade among the poor villagers with an eye to a handful of grain or vegetables. Sooner or later we hoped to meet them, but for the present all the evidence we had of them were abandoned hearths and a helpless pup they had heartlessly abandoned.

V
539 At Landegama was a hunter who entertained us far into the night with jungle tales. He described to us how leopards caught monkeys. The animal climbs a tree in the line of feeding langurs, and waits concealed. When one of them comes near enough he springs on it and both fall to the ground. Should the attempt fail, the leopard gives forth a series of fearful growls and rushes hither and thither making great commotion; then suddenly becomes quiet and hides. Inquisitiveness is the monkeys' undoing; at first, uttering their cries of rage and terror, the 'ah-he-hik' so familiar to hunters, they look for him from secure heights; but not seeing him they become bolder and bolder and come down lower and lower; until eventually, one pays the price of his foolhardiness.

V
342 Wadinagala village, singularly enough, lies farther from the rock of
361 that name than Landegama which nestles at its foot. Here was a medley of huts well illustrating the various types prevalent in the Vanni. The roofs of all were *illuk*-thatched; but the walls were various: a few were made of mud, some of wattle and bast, others of wattle and maize sheaths or of leafy twigs; while most had two or more of these combined.

000 A sudden shower, that caught us as we rested on the banks of the
V Palang Oya, proved the harbinger of many wet days to come. That
[132] evening we entered Kokunahare in the pelting rain, our clothes, bedding and food deplorably drenched. Rushing into the first hut we found we ousted its occupants with gentle persuasion. Cooking was out of the question; but our ever-ready lunch basket provided a menu of tongue, fruit salad, biscuits and cheese, and a thermos-flaskful of hot tea. What shifts the shivering carriers made for food or sleep we had not the courage to inquire.

PRIAR'S HOOD

54

V
751

accompanied him, now struck the bear with his axe and, when she turned on him, killed her. So much for charms; excellent things—provided a weapon is in your hands. "Trust in God," says the Arabic proverb, "but fasten thy camel securely."

G
361

Uhana was a surprise; the place gave every promise of being in a few years a flourishing settlement, thanks to Government grants of land, cattle and grain on easy terms. Luck at last! Near Uhana was a gypsy camp. Wadinagala gave us first promise of these people; but like a mirage they had faded from stage to stage of our journey, leaving only their camp refuse to mock us. Now, here they were, within two miles of us. We stayed over the next morning that we might visit them. As we neared their encampment we met a man who told us that he had passed them on their way to another camp. They who had been here for weeks must needs pack and begone within an hour of our visit! They were bound, the man said, for a place a mile and a half away. We followed, but did not find them there; instead, was another tantalizer who assured us that we would find them on a knoll by a stream a mile and a half beyond. We proceeded, painfully aware that every step of our way must be retraced in the broiling sun before we could earn our lunch. Disappointment again! Almost tearful with frustration and fatigue, we had thrown ourselves down, when a kindly individual came to our aid.

"Rest here," he said. "I shall go forward and see. Come if you hear me 'hoo.' I can tell of their presence some distance away by the crowing of their cocks and the clatter of their camp." We waited and were rewarded.

G
[42][23]
[34]

On an undulant opening, reminiscent of Somerset pastures, we found the gypsies. They had just unloaded their pack-bulls and were setting up camp under the blazing sky of noon, disdainful of the shelter of the cool environing jungle—the very antithesis of Vedda ways. Cattle and fowls flecked the glade; boys led goats into the forest. Women, graceful as Dianas, were erecting talipot shelters over collected household goods and communal stacks of grain. Tall men, lithe and sinewy as greyhounds, with mongrels at their heels, carried naked babes. Children, reading favour in our faces, essayed shrill nasal choruses clapping arms to chest. The chief, a quietly curious, grizzled man, with a care-free air bred of the freedom and independence of his life, held in play a vicious cobra just captured. He summed the gypsy life in a sentiment savouring of Borrow: "What are we?" he said. "Children of the open ways, bronzed by the sun, soaked by the rain, born on the trail, buried on the trail. That is our life." They had a sambur spear among them, and apparently only one man adept in its use; but that spear, their little dogs and their own untiring sinews were match enough for any sambur once started.

G
622G
411
224V
361V
103V
131

From Uhane to Kotelinda by way of hill-girdled Bokkebedda in the drenching rain. Here, at a glance, we noticed crude little Vedda huts amidst those of the Sinhalese villagers. We were now among the hills of Madana long famed for Veddas; but to-day their caves are only tenanted by bears. Up to now we had traversed a stretch of country designated on the maps Maha-Veddi-Ratta (Great Vedda Country)—an empty name of about as much significance at the present time as the term Cinnamon Gardens applied to Colombo. Kotelinda lies in the centre of a region that is to-day the last stronghold of the Veddas—that

4. FRIAR'S HOOD AND THE VEDDAS OF GALMEDE

ACCOMPANIED by Kauwa and a Tamil, we left Divulana to enter upon the wildest part of our journey. The *illuk* glades, so familiar to us for many days, now gave place to jungle sunless, forsaken, virginal and silent save for the cry of a cicala or the rustle of a jungle cock or chevrotan. 000

Crossing the Amankelle Oya we came to the deserted home of the Bandaradua Veddas—Kauwa's old home. It outlay a glade in full view of the Bandaradua rock. All that now marked the place were a cadju tree, that spread its branches in a great canopy, and a few live fence sticks all overgrown with *pussela-wel*, the pounded bark of which the Veddass soak in water rendering it soapy for cleansing their lousy heads. 361 515 324

Late in the evening we were at the foot of Friar's Hood, that loneliest of Ceylon's forest hills, the landmark of the old Portuguese mariners. The environing jungle was sinister with the menace of unseen things. Here our guide had once encountered a gang of no less than six bears, and indicated to us the very trees up which he and his companion had shinned. It was not the sort of place one would care to be in alone; and yet, in a clearing by the rock, a Moor had recently lived with his wife for three years, growing amidst his cassava a deadlier plant,* the joy and bane of Eastern lands. 000

We camped on this deserted plantation. As it darkened a sambar belled and stamped around us in high dudgeon that his accustomed pasturage had been usurped. The hooded peak before us melted into the gloom, only to stand out again under the stars more sinister and secret than ever. This lonely outlaw, standing away from the herded hills, had survived a race of men. It was there when the first paleolithic ancestors of the Veddass crossed from India, when Ceylon and that land were one. Towards it, and the security it afforded, was the best remnant of that race gradually driven by succeeding waves of civilisation through the long years. To-day around it the last of the Veddass are dying. And yet,

The hills are shadows and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mists, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

It is difficult to say where Galmede really begins. We must ascribe to it all that tract of deserted *chenas*, with their crumbling Vedda shelters and *more* forests devastated by elephants, between Friar's Hood and the Magalawatavan Oya, on the other bank of which stand the few huts that comprise the Galmede of to-day. This place, the port of our dreams, we entered with beating hearts. 103 361

The first individual to meet us was no Vedda at all but a Chetty!

"Where are the Veddass?" I asked eagerly. 361

"There are no Veddass here," he said.

**Cannabis indica*.

CHAPTER VII BINTENNE

THE pass at Kadugannawa was thronged with bartering humanity. Being Sunday, it was market day, and the occasion served well to help us lay in a good stock of tobacco and betel, the best passport to the wild interior.

On through Teldeniya, whose cocoa plantations teem with snails that straggle over the road to explode under our car-wheels, and then, after Urugalla, we climb the Nugatenne gap and, skirting the Dumbara valley, attain beautiful wind-swept Madugoda. So far among the hills. From here it is a sudden drop to the Mahaweli and the wilderness beyond. We have left Madugoda but a little way when, at a turn, there suddenly opens before us a magic sea of misty greenery broken by hill ranges; there stand many blue mountains we know, Kokagalla, the dancing rock of the Veddas, and Friar's Hood faint and far; and there gleam a river and a tank; the former the Mahaweli, the latter placid Horabora Wewa traditional lake of Vedda lands.

The descent from the hills here is perhaps the most precipitous in all Ceylon; we drop some two thousand feet, and negotiate eighteen elbow bends within four miles; then, skirting the base of the mountain we come to the ferry of Weragantota and cross the Mahaweli in canoes to Alutnuwara, a fever-stricken place; whoever sojourns here even a few days invariably pays the penalty.

A quaint old town is Alutnuwara, or Bintenne as the jungle dwellers call it. Cosy homes and boutiques nestle under shady trees. Chained monkeys and caged parrots are ubiquitous and may be purchased for a song. Laden *lavalam* teams rest here on their way to the interior. It being April, every tree has its nesting bird—bee-catchers, bulbuls, drongos, coppersmiths and all the rest of them; hungry little squirrels cheep spasmodically for food; song fills the air.

Scattered about the place one is surprised to find old cannon. Those who see them for the first time frame visions of an era when ancient Sinhalese kings built these in foundries, and fed them with powder made from sulphur and nitre available in the neighbouring hills. But we may safely assume that firearms were unknown in Ceylon prior to the coming of the Portuguese. What then is the story of these brave things that lie in a ditch here, set off a doorway there? They were brought here, according to some, from the East coast by the English in their attempts to take Kandy; but finding the mountain barrier impassable they abandoned them here. The more likely explanation, however, is that they are a survival of the time when Alutnuwara was a military station after the Kandyan rebellion of 1817. "the last great occasion on which the English forces were arrayed in hostility against the natives of any portion of Ceylon."* To prevent a repetition of rebellion, a